

General Topics :: Bitter as a grapefruit

Bitter as a grapefruit - posted by mguldner (), on: 2010/6/20 15:05

So I just wanted to know how exactly do you deal with bitterness in a whole congregation? There are key people in our church that have been the shakey pillars of our church and seem very bitter towards everyone they have a little posie that gets together and complains about every thing in the church and how it aut to be in the church. Any advise?

Re: Bitter as a grapefruit - posted by ccchhrrriiiss (), on: 2010/6/20 21:24

Hi mguldner...

I remember watching a David Wilkerson message once about this sort of thing.

It seems that there was a woman who was new to Times Square Church. She met with Brother Dave and praised the congregation for "standing for truth." However, she then proceeded to complain about her previous congregation, pastors, and elders. She also complained about everything that she saw "wrong" with the Church as a whole. It seems that if everyone didn't believe exactly as this woman at any given moment of her Christian walk, then people were "not following God" wholeheartedly.

Brother David mentioned this woman to other pastors or leaders at TSC. He said that he felt that it was just a matter of time before this woman "hooks up" with another woman at TSC who seemed to share the same propensity for complaining. Brother Dave felt that these two would be magnets for one another; after all, misery loves company!

Sure enough, these women were sitting together within a few short weeks. Within a short period of time, these women were able to find enough "wrong" with Times Square Church to leave.

I suppose that it is important to note that there is nothing wrong with good Biblical discernment. Unfortunately, the many complaints that divide the Body of Christ are anything but "discerning." It is easy to see things only through the lens of our own understanding, personal views or sectarian biases. In addition, it is easy to view others by our own current stage of "maturity" (or lack thereof). In some cases, we can become like nagging old women (or men) who complain about the current state of a congregation by relying on some misguided memory of "the good ol' days." By dwelling on the past (rather than using it merely as a primer for what can happen in the future), we might develop a tendency to lose faith (or patience) in what God has done or will do in others who allow Him to work.

It is okay to be negative -- as long as that "negativity" is shared in a hope for a positive outcome and always with an undeniable spirit of love and humility. I think that all of us who congregate here on SermonIndex might sound negative at times when we consider the state of the modern "Church" (as a conglomerate institution). While we might come across as negative in our hope for a genuine revival (or awakening), it can be the same as a lonely "voice calling out in the wilderness." John the Baptist was not viewed as a "nag" because he openly and humbly pointed to Truth. He complained about the sins of man that had separated mankind from God...but with a broken and lonely heart. Still, the Word describes John the Baptist as having attracted multitudes to his message of repentance.

Today, many people are filling Church grapevines -- not with the undeniable words of Truth from a broken spirit -- but with words of doctrinal or sectarian relativism. They come across as "looking down" upon those poor, less-spiritual souls who don't necessarily agree with all of their views of how things should be done, what should be taught or who should "really" be in "leadership." I have noticed that many of those who are prone to complaining are often grumbling about the same levels of maturity that those who complain were at just a few short years earlier.

What to do? The best thing to do is to be a good example to such people. Let them see your faithfulness and love for everyone -- including those that you might not agree with on every last issue. Let others see that you don't view them as "less spiritual" or "less capable" simply because they don't agree with a non-essential doctrinal view or practice. After all, the Word of God says that the world will know that we are disciples of Christ by our love for one another (John 13:35). This love should not be hypocritically reserved for (or extended to) those who we simply agree with on every matter. I have noticed that this is the case in many congregations where people extend such love only to those that they agree with and also to non-Christians. Rather, our love should shine before all men so that they may praise our Father (Matthew 5:16).

I will be praying for your congregation!

Re: Bitter as a grapefruit, on: 2010/6/21 0:13

Above all else, pray for them and take your lead from God, as the scriptures point out this very issue in different ways, and what should be done.

This is one of those problems, that if not eliminated, a vibrant thriving church will come to it's end.

The children of Israel could have made it to the promised land in 11 days, and 40 years later, because of murmuring and complaining, even their carcasses did not make it out of the wilderness. Of that generation, only Joshua and Caleb crossed the Jordan.

God is never ever pleased with murmuring and complaining. It will cut off God's help and protection because it is an exhibition of unbelief.

Single them out and talk to them.
If this does not work, expose them.

Often it's the one you do not hear saying anything that are the problem... yet you will find them keeping close company with the complainers and jovial about it. Keep your eyes open for talebearers...but you didn't hear that from me (you can laugh now). If somebody busybodies about others business, usually, what they are doing is stirring up strife by turning everybody against each other, which leads to bickering and contentiousness. Those that talk about others are prying for more information to talk about in the sharing of their evil words.

It is divisive and that is what happens. On a lesser scale, members separate off into groups. On a larger scale, there is wholesale division.

Over the years, this issue has been dealt with according to need.

Most do not realize just how serious this sin is or even recognize it as such. It is the exact opposite of loving your neighbor or as yourself.

In the book of James it talks about wars and fightings amongst members through bitter envy and strife. He makes it clear it is self-deception, and that to do such is lying--(against the truth). He also says that the cause is worldly wisdom exhibited through lust. Carnal LUST is the root of this problem.

Paul in Romans 1 says that this problem is at the very root of reprobation: "...because they did not honor God and neither were they thankful..." You see it manifest in these bitter ones by their complaints about everything yet never helping to solve these "things that are soooo wrong." They have a handle on every little problem but are unclear about what to do because of the self-deception.

Over the past two years, there has been little run-in with such, and it is probably due to the way they are put in their place swiftly.

Get to know them on a personal level and confront hypocrisy immediately when it is noted.

Some of the 'nicer' things that could be done are whenever there is a complaint made, call them aside with you to pray about the problems; but before you do, ask them if they really believe God has all the answers and that he can change anything that seems to be wrong. (See, murmuring and complaining are in opposition to prayer.)--personally, after this, I'll tell them outright, that they know their prayer assignment now because God would not have revealed the problem(s) to them in the first place if this were not the case. (Prayer changes us more than it does things.)

Find out if they have any prayer requests; because if they don't (for their selves), you can rest assured their hearts are hardened and only the hammer of God's Word is going to shatter such stone cold heart.

Assign them menial tasks in the church telling them , "we'll start with little problems and needs first and work up from there. This leaves plenty of room for time talking with them when YOU SHARE IN THE TASKS THEY DO.

Sad thing is, these are those who will never be content anywhere and are often further from godliness than a skid row bum. They are so busy complaining they are blind to their own need of our Saviour.

Shakey pillars are easily pushed over, and no congregation needs that kind of support.

Many being called aside and dealt with from the scriptures do repent, yet in time they drift back into old patterns. Those who do repent need to be converted in their ways, and bringing the scriptures related repeatedly to their attention does wonders.

Sermons repeated from various perspectives that relate to needs in this area are never out of date. Some predominant issues relative to this very problem are as follows: inability to give everything to Christ, unforgiveness, laying down your life, anger, lust, wicked imaginations, repentance, carnality, the reprobate, deceiving yourself, Ahab, Jezebel, Children of Israel in the wilderness, division, busybodies and talebearers, and so on and on...

It is best to make the issue a non-issue by assault from in front and behind, leaving no room to escape confrontation against faithlessness.

Really, they are trying to get attention, so give them more than they can handle by dealing with them one on one, as well as in their clichés. Give their busy bodies better things to do.

If they can't stand the heat????
...the problem goes away.

Hebrews tells us that the root of bitterness contaminates the whole.

People who spread unbelief in our God who is more than able are not walking in love, and unity of the faith(ful) is far from their understanding.

They do not just need prayer as this is the spirit of something other than Christ.

Show them their need to change, and how to do it.
Be very patient in this.

Let them see their own need to conform to what the scriptures clearly state.

Proverbs has many aphorisms and axioms appropriate to this issue.

Agapeo,
g
Acts 20:332

edited: written too fast to get all the word typed, and it was sent it without checking. (i've gotta' quit doing that!)

Re: Bitter as a grapefruit - posted by Lysa (), on: 2010/6/21 6:22

Brother Matthew,

Since the Lord has seemed to have laid this on your heart, maybe it is for you to seek the Lord for these people and for the wisdom what to do about it because this is a grievous sin. They are wolves in sheep's clothing and Carter Conlon has one of the best sermon's on "Wolves."

<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/mydownloads/singlefile.php?lid=2158&commentView=itemComments>

God bless you with the answers you are seeking,

Re: - posted by mguldner (), on: 2010/6/21 6:52

First off thank you all for the Godly advise, I know what spirit they are operating in Galatians 5 in the NLT and one of the fruits of the flesh is "you think that everyone is wrong except your little group" so that is already exposed I believe a great deal of this is the maturity level of some of the people is a 2 year old which my son is 2 now and his favorite thing to tell his sister is "MINE!" I was thinking about telling my pastor about all of this to equip him and let him know what they are saying. My head pastor's strong points are administration unfortunately his preaching isn't as strong and he will be the first to tell you that but I am loving him through that. I do very much appreciate his wisdom on matters such as these and he is one to lay the axe to the root so to speak if he needs to.

I believe that the saddest part about all of this is these are people are a great bunch of people but this little group is a poison that runs in its veins that will simply kill this church. Their biggest complaint is worship as is a usual case, I thought about just stepping down and the lady that usually plays the hymnals would play. (She isn't one of the problem people she has a great spirit and loves this coming generation very much):)

I tried listening to that sermon and it didn't work or load so hopefully it will work later when I have more time to listen to it. Thanks again for the advise

God Bless,
Matthew

Re: Bitter as a grapefruit, on: 2010/6/21 9:29

Quote:

-----There are key people in our church

Praying for them is the only answer. You can't verbally get through to them, if the Prophets have only been able to get through to a few if that, how much can we do?

However, James 5:16 says, The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

The real problem is the Pastor. He is either aware of it and won't do anything, or he is aware of it and is afraid to do anything for \$\$\$ sake.

There are "clicks" in every congregation. They have a pride that believes that they are the only one's right and everyone else is wrong. Very much like the Pharisees. You can't go to them in love, you have to go to them in rebuke the same way Jesus did with His opponents in His day. But even that is not enough, remember Jesus was crucified by them.

I have a brother here in the city who went to a local assembly to take a message to the Pastor, to rebuke him, and he sent them by letters and then by voice. The Pastor so put him down, ran him through the mud that he barely makes a peep. His spirit was so battered that for all these years have kept to himself. No one stood with him, and he doubts whether God sent him or not.

I for one believe that He did. Prophets have doubted their ministry before.

By the way, not all grapefruit is bitter. Pink is sweeter, while the yellow is bitter.

Re: - posted by mguldner (), on: 2010/6/21 9:41

I think you might be right about the for money sake part, they are also the biggest tithers in church I think. Ultimately my pastor is the one that is going to have to decide do we want to cut away the cancer that gives money or do we want to slowly die by this bitterness. I for one am not the captain and won't be going down with the ship, there is a very nice Youth Pastoring job that is open at the Baptist church in town that has a NonBaptist pastor who is really awesome.